

Towards an Enhanced Service Capacity:

Service Providers' Perspectives on Successes
and Challenges in Serving Immigrants

June 2010



Settlement



Economic Integration



Language



Education



Health & Wellbeing



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Integration Capacity
Development

Copies of this report can be obtained from the :

Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP)

219 Argyle Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 2H4

Tel: (613) 232-9634

Fax: (613) 232-3660

Email: info@olip-plio.ca

www.olip-plio.ca

Funded by :



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada

OLIP Project Team

Dick Stewart

OLIP Council Chair

Jephtée Elysée

OLIP Council Vice-Chair

Caroline Andrew

OLIP Steering Committee Chair

Clara Freire

Client Service Strategies, Organizational Performance Development
City of Ottawa

Carl Nicholson

Executive Director, Catholic Immigration Centre

Hindia Mohamoud

OLIP Project Director

Jill Murphy

OLIP Outreach and Research Coordinator

Zoë Mallett

OLIP Administrative Assistant

Bill Shields

Facilitator

Rosanne Emard

Facilitator

Charles C. Smith

Observer and Report Writer

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I. Introduction

1.1 Overview

On April 15th 2010, the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP) invited settlement, social, health and education service providers to discuss their capacity to support the settlement and integration of immigrants. This was one of a series of five consultations¹ that OLIP convened in order to understand the perspectives of Ottawa stakeholders regarding our community's success and challenges in welcoming, settling, and integrating immigrants in all aspects of community life. The OLIP consultations and other research activities, which included a literature review, and an inventory of services available for immigrants in Ottawa, were the first step of a year-long planning process that intends to develop an Ottawa wide strategy to:

- › improve immigrants' economic integration;
- › improve immigrants' access to a coordinated system of settlement, language, social, health, and education services that facilitate the settlement and integration process;
- › build community awareness and capacity to integrate immigrants;

- › establish mechanisms for inter-sectoral partnerships to support a continued community planning and coordination of solutions.

This report will summarize the insights that emerged from the participants' discussion and make recommendations for help Ottawa move forward towards the creation of a community-wide strategy for improving the settlement and integration of immigrants.

The report is organized in four parts. Part I describes OLIP's Consultation with Ottawa's service provider organizations (SPOs), its purpose, and how the discussion on service providers' capacity to serve immigrants was framed. Part II offers an overview of the Ottawa context: who are the immigrants coming to Ottawa? What are their needs? What are their expectations? The content of Part II was shared with the participants of OLIP's Consultation with Ottawa's with SPOs to help them prepare for the Consultation. Part III summarizes and analyzes the outcomes of the consultation. Part IV provides a general analysis on emerging themes and articulates the recommendations that are intended to feed into the community planning process facilitated by OLIP.

1. *The other four OLIP consultations were held with:*

- › *Immigrants*
- › *Settlement service providers*
- › *Employers and economic development actors*
- › *Immigrants' civic associations, advocating for the betterment of immigrants' participation in community life.*

1.2 Description of the Event

The OLIP Consultation with Ottawa's service provider organizations was a half-day event, held at the RA Centre on April 15, 2010. Approximately eighty (80) individuals, representing over fifty (50) organizations, attended the consultation. The participating organizations were both large and small, and included multiple departments of the City of Ottawa, including Ottawa Public Health, the Ottawa Public Library, Ottawa Police Service, Ottawa Community Housing, local school boards, settlement service providers, health and resource centres, United Way/Centraide Ottawa, family service centres, the Social Planning Council, children and youth service providers, and a broad range of medium and small community-based service organizations.

Opening remarks were provided by the OLIP Council Chair, Dick Stewart, and the OLIP Steering Committee Chair, Caroline Andrew, followed by a presentation on the OLIP Project provided by the OLIP Project Director, Hindia Mohamoud. A keynote address was offered by Sherri Torjman, Vice-President of the Caledon Institute of Social Policy on the value of social services in our community and the necessity for creative collaborations to create the new capacities we need to deal with emerging realities and challenges. All the speakers encouraged the participants to engage in dialogue and to consider creative and innovative ways of working together and enhancing our capacity to effectively integrate immigrants, and thus our capacity to increase the benefits we all draw from immigration.

After the introductory panel, the participants delved into the discussions of the Consultation, facilitated by Bill Shields and Rosanne Emard. Participants were seated in small round tables of 8-10 people,

representing a diverse mix of service organizations. Discussions were held in both small groups and in plenary sessions, allowing the participants to examine the key points deeply within the small groups, and then share the results of their deliberations with the larger group. Some of the tables conducted their discussions in French, thus enabling Francophone service providers to address the unique successes and challenges that are specific to service provision in French in our community.

The consultation concluded at 1pm, with Hindia Mohamoud, OLIP Project Director, thanking the participants and offering the next steps regarding the use that OLIP intends to make of participants' contributions, and inviting the participants to stay connected with the OLIP process.

COMMON CAPACITY CHALLENGES THAT TEND TO IMPEDE EFFECTIVE SERVICE ACCESS FOR IMMIGRANTS:

Cultural competency › How do service providers deal with challenges related to cultural difference in their day-to-day work? Does the staff of service provider organizations receive cultural competency training that would enable them to serve diverse clientele?

Language › Is language a barrier to serving immigrants? What mechanisms are used by service providers to mitigate language-related challenges?

Anti-racism › Do service providers practice anti-racism approaches in the workplace and in dealing with clients, so as to create a non-discriminatory environment? What strategies do they use in order to do so? What helps?

Governance and relationships with constituency › What is the nature of service providers' relationship with immigrant communities in Ottawa? How effective are organizations in reaching out to immigrants to inform them of new services, to engage them in the leadership of their organizations, or to partake in competitions for senior level positions?

Ability to plan effectively so as to respond to change › Are service providers equipped to respond to dynamically changing communities or clients? How are service providers able to "keep up" with changes in the needs of the communities that they serve? Do they (and how often do they) undertake needs assessments?

Collaboration / Partnership › To what extent does collaboration or partnership (either formal or informal; either with same sector partners or outside of own sectors such as settlement service providers) help build organizations' capacity to serve immigrants? Is there a need for improved collaboration? How can collaboration between and among service and settlement organizations lead to improved services for immigrants?

Awareness & Leadership › To what extent are the management, the boards of directors, or the officials responsible for steering the directions that service providers take in determining their focus or designing service combinations and delivery models aware of the changing nature of the communities they serve and of the needs of immigrants, who form an increasingly growing proportion of their constituencies?

Policy & Funding Issues › Does the policy and funding environment support service providers' efforts to build their capacities to meet the needs of immigrants?

1.3 Purpose and Design

The purpose of the OLIP consultation with Ottawa's service provider organizations (SPOs) was two fold: a) to understand the perspectives of Ottawa's SPOs on their capacities to meet the needs of immigrants and effectively support their settlement and integration in the Ottawa Community; and b) to devise recommendations for improving immigrants' access to a coordinated and enhanced system of settlement, health, social, and education services in Ottawa.

It is now well documented that new immigrants face a number of barriers and challenges that include, but are not limited to: learning new languages, finding appropriate housing, integrating children into the local school systems, understanding the Canadian health system and accessing needed services, finding employment in their field and getting their foreign credentials recognized, learning how to adapt to local cultures and a new environment, and dealing with discrimination.

Service providers play an essential role in mitigating these challenges. However, in order to effectively meet the needs of immigrants, service providers need different types of capacities. The box on the previous page lists the capacity barriers that typically confront service providers as they seek to successfully serve our community, which increasingly includes immigrants. In order to enable a common understanding and to allow for a thoughtful participation, OLIP provided the invitees with a pre-consultation "work book", which included summaries of:

- › A review of literature on immigrants' settlement and integration, describing Ottawa's immigrant population and their needs;

- › Findings from OLIP consultations with immigrants and with settlement service providers, held in the months of February and March 2010, articulating the perspectives of immigrants regarding the challenges they face and the experiences and vision of Ottawa's settlement sector;
- › Lists of common capacity challenges that service providers are confronted with as they seek to meet the needs of immigrants (see the list above).

This pre-consultation material, designed to help participants prepare for the consultation, is included in part two of this report. With the above described background information, the participants were asked to discuss the following key questions:

- › How does your organization seek to serve immigrants?
- › What strategies and approaches have made you successful in serving immigrants?
- › What service barriers and gaps are you aware of in serving immigrants?
- › How might these challenges and gaps be addressed?
- › Who should sit at the table to address the challenges?

Each small group discussed these questions and reported back to the larger group during the plenary sessions, which helped to ensure that all participants were aware of what has been discussed at each table and to build consensus on key successes and

on common capacity challenges effecting service providers' abilities to support immigrant settlement and integration in Ottawa.



II. Background and Context

Summarized in the following paragraphs is the content of the pre-consultation material that OLIP provided to all consultation participants in order to help develop a common understanding of immigration in Ottawa and the needs of immigrants.

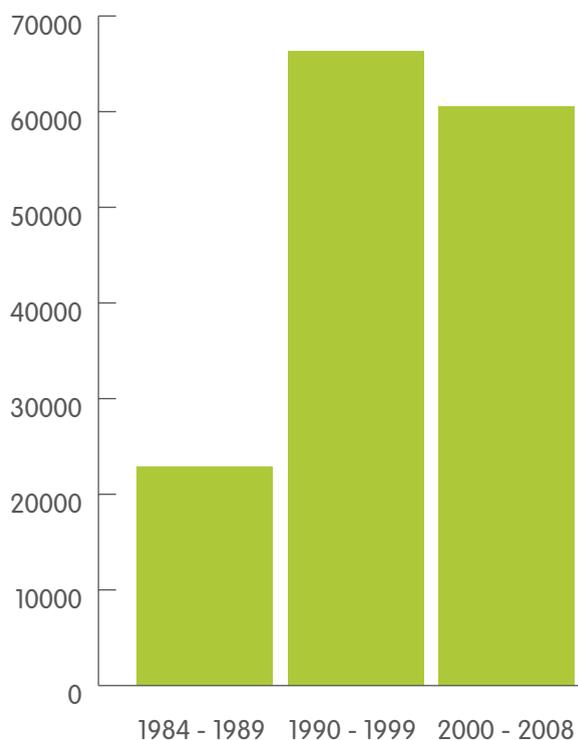
2.1 Ottawa's Immigrant Population

Ottawa has the fifth largest number of foreign-born residents and new immigrants in Canada, after Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver and Calgary (Statistics Canada, 2006). Out of a total population of 801,275, 178,540 (22%) individuals are immigrants (City of Ottawa, Census 2006).

Immigration in Ottawa grew rapidly in the last two decades. Between 1986 and 2001, the immigrant population in Ottawa grew at a rate of 65%, compared to 46% in Ontario, and 39% in Canada (City of Ottawa, 2007). This means that although immigration has been part of Ottawa's history for more than a century, a large proportion of the Ottawa's foreign-born population is relatively new to Canada.

Immigrants come to Ottawa from all regions of the world. Many choose Ottawa after an initial settlement in other Canadian cities due to our city's reputation for being a bilingual city, and also due to a number of other attraction features, including our world-class universities and colleges, our green spaces, our school systems, and our highly educated and diverse communities.

New Immigrants in Ottawa



Source: *Immigration in Ottawa's History: A Multi-City Comparative Analysis*

In tandem with growth in the size of Ottawa's immigrant population is a rapid growth of Ottawa's racialized population. Between 1996 and 2001, Ottawa's racialized population grew by 28 percent. Persons of African descent make up the majority of Ottawa's racialized peoples at 25%, followed by Chinese (20%), South Asian (17%) and Arab (15%). More than a quarter of recent immigrants are Muslims. Another 8% are Buddhists, Hindus or Sikhs (Vineberg, 2010).

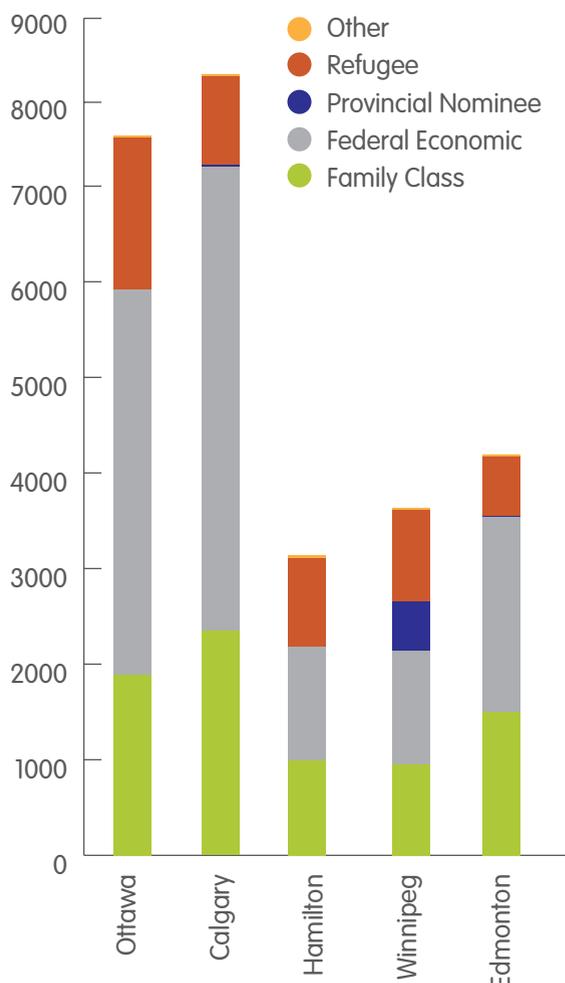
Immigration is key to Ottawa’s future, in that it represents the city’s main source of population growth and labour force renewal. In 2004, immigration contributed to 70% of Ottawa’s labour force growth, while the Canadian-born labour force contributed to just 30%. By 2011, immigrants will account for 100% of the city’s net labour force growth (City of Ottawa, 2007). 69% of immigrants in Ottawa are of “working age”, between 25-64 years, compared to 53% of the Canadian-born population (Canadian Labour and Business Centre et al, 2003, 3).

Immigrants in Ottawa are also more educated than their Canadian born counterparts; 79% of women and 86% of men possess a degree prior to their arrival (City of Ottawa, 2007). In fact, Ottawa receives the most highly educated immigrants of any Canadian city. A significant number of immigrants who arrived in Ottawa between 2001 and 2006 had some level of competency in English and/or French, with 93.2% possessing knowledge of one or more official language. In addition to the capacity of immigrants in Canada’s official languages, immigrants also bring with them a multitude of global languages: 69 mother tongue languages other than French and English are spoken in Ottawa (Social Planning Council, 2009, 21).

Immigrants in Ottawa are diverse in multiple respects, including in their backgrounds, circumstances of arrival, culture, languages, ethnicity, age, gender, and family status. Notably, 40% of immigrants arrive in Ottawa as children (0-14 years) or youth (15-24 years), resulting in our reality where 11% of Ottawa’s children and youth are born outside of Canada (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2009, 23) and many more are born to immigrant parents. In addition, roughly 31 percent of Ottawa’s senior population is born outside of Canada (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2009, 27).

It is also noteworthy that Ottawa attracts a relatively larger number of refugees than other, similar sized cities (see graph below). This is significant because the settlement and integration process of refugees tends to be more challenging than that experienced by immigrants arriving through the other classes in Canada’s immigration policy.

Components of Immigration, 2000



(Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Facts and Figures 2008 Digital Library, Ottawa, 2009.)

2.2 The Needs of Ottawa's New Immigrants

In general, immigrants of all backgrounds require some level of assistance to settle into the local community. Typically, orientation and referral services and general supports in their initial navigation of our complex systems are provided by the local settlement service providers. However, the level of supports specific groups of immigrants require varies based on multiple factors, such as background, fluency in local languages, education level, social network, age, family and immigration status, etc. Conversely, the level of supports available for different groups of immigrants varies, based on our service and funding infrastructure.

The literature identifies a number of risk-factors for immigrants including: a drop in socio-economic status after migration; challenges adapting to cultural aspects of the official languages of Canada; family separation; unfriendliness of the host society, which can include discrimination based on race, ethnicity and religion; isolation from their cultural community; experience of trauma related to pre-migration stresses; and migrating as an adolescent or senior.¹

Finding appropriate employment is often extremely difficult for immigrants. Unemployed and underemployed men and women make up a vulnerable group requiring support. Barriers to finding work include lack of Canadian experience and recognition of foreign credentials and/or experience, biases in the hiring process, and lack of awareness by employers. Many immigrants cite discrimination and racism as

a significant barrier. This may include religious discrimination, particularly in a post- 9/11 environment.

Immigrant women identify childcare issues as an additional barrier to finding work and obtaining financial stability. They need childcare services that are more affordable and that provide flexible hours to accommodate women who work shifts. Immigrant women also identify the need for counselling and mental health services, and for social opportunities to support their emotional well-being.²

While much immigration policy is focused on labour market issues, many immigrants, including skilled workers, arrive with their families. This creates an important need for service providers to address the need for specific services for children and youth, and for their families. After immigration, families are extremely vulnerable, requiring targeted support. Challenges faced include changes in gender relations as a result of entering a new society, intergenerational conflict (between children, parents and grandparents), loneliness and lack of support specifically for families as a unit, and high stress levels that may lead to low self esteem, with further negative impacts on families. Family violence becomes a significant concern during the early phase of the settlement and integration process and may be underreported.

Immigrant youth also face unique challenges in their settlement and integration and, as such, have unique needs. Specific service needs of immigrant youth include: supportive engagement, employment, health promotion and health services (including mental health), counselling, and crime prevention measures

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1. Jill Murphy (2010). "Review of Literature." *Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership*.
 2. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2006). "Consultations on the Settlement and Language Training Services Needs of Newcomers." Report prepared by InterQuest Consulting.

to help youth to avoid becoming involved in petty crimes with long term consequences.

Immigrant seniors are also vulnerable. They may experience a number of changes upon migration, such as a change in the age-related status that they were accustomed to in their home countries. Many immigrant seniors do not speak English or French upon arrival and many do not learn the official languages in Canada. In addition, isolation is a serious concern for many immigrant seniors.

Refugees are a yet another vulnerable group requiring tailored support and services. Many refugees have physical or mental health challenges and may have been victims of torture or sexual violence prior to arriving in Canada.

2.3 Summaries of OLIP Consultations with the Settlement Sector and with Immigrants

OLIP is in the process of undertaking a number of research and consultation activities in order to better understand the “landscape” of immigrant services in Ottawa, and the associated strengths and challenges. In the last two months, OLIP has conducted a consultation with the settlement service sector, which included twelve Ottawa organizations working directly to support immigrants’ settlement and integration. We also conducted four focus groups with Francophone and Anglophone immigrant women and men. The following brief overview of some of the themes emerging from these activities was provided to participants before the consultation to help develop

a common understanding and to enable an informed and thoughtful participation in the SPO consultation.

2.3.1 Consultation with the Settlement Sector: Selected Themes

The following is an excerpt from the proceedings of the OLIP Consultation with the Settlement Sector, which is provided here in order to begin presenting the expectations of the multiple sectors that are involved in supporting immigrants’ settlement and integration.

Paradigm Shift is needed

The collaborative strategy that will emerge from the work of OLIP should represent a paradigm shift, and must include both operational and systems level recommendations. This involves advocating for a shift in how immigrants are regarded in the community, from being seen as “outsiders to help” to being seen as new citizens and new community members. A vital part of this is establishing processes, mechanisms and tools to support cultural shifts in service organizations to promote the diversity of their leadership cadre.

Cultural Competency

It is necessary to recognize the role that culture plays in communication, effectively working together in workplaces, and in immigrants’ access to services. This not only refers to individual culture, but also to organizational culture. More resources and space are needed for coordination and for the development of trust-based partnerships. This refers to partnerships both within the settlement sector and, more broadly, between the settlement sector and other service providers.

2.3.2 Consultation with Immigrants: Selected Themes

Employment is a key concern for immigrants that impacts all aspects of their lives. The immigrants who participated in the OLIP Focus Groups shared that they do not necessarily arrive in Canada with the expectation to immediately find work in their fields without Canadian experience and are very willing to take part in internships, probationary periods, bridging programs, etc. They want the opportunity to gain Canadian experience and to demonstrate their existing competence and are often surprised by the scarcity of opportunities to do so. They find it extremely frustrating to not even be able to find good volunteering opportunities.

Immigrants' civic associations play a key role in promoting successful integration and are committed to undertaking an extra-ordinary amount of volunteer work to help new immigrants who need help in many areas, including accessing health care, providing free interpretation services, or advocating for the needs of immigrants to be met. There is a need to leverage the knowledge and commitment of immigrants' civic associations and enable their participation in Ottawa's public service and community life.

Immigrants participating in the OLIP Focus Groups shared common concerns in the following areas:

- › Challenges in accessing housing. For example, they reported that even when they have money to rent an apartment, the landlord will not rent to them without Canadian references or a co-signer.
- › Many report challenges in negotiating the health system - they are happy with the level of care offered but surprised at the difficulty of finding a doctor, the 3 month wait time for OHIP, etc. There is some concern about knowledge of tropical illnesses (i.e. malaria) among physicians in Ottawa.
- › Many cite limited childcare as a barrier to finding work, taking language classes, and engaging socially and with the community.
- › Many report that existing services are excellent, but obtaining information about them remains challenging.
- › Many are impressed with the education system, but noted the importance of supporting children and their parents with adapting to a new culture and educational system.
- › Nutrition was also discussed numerous times, with concerns ranging from negotiating unfamiliar aisles at the grocery store, to finding and accessing culturally appropriate foods, to the challenge of children wanting to eat only "Canadian" food. Throughout this discussion, declining health was a concern.
- › Opportunities for social interaction, such as recreation and volunteerism, were considered essential. While focus group participants generally felt that Canadians are quite friendly, specific opportunities to develop social networks are needed.



III. Themes Emerging from the Consultation

This section of our report will focus on the ideas and themes emerging from the OLIP Consultation with Ottawa’s service provider organizations from multiple sectors, such as settlement, health, education, and a wide range of social services. The emerging themes are categorized under three broad headings: 1) successful strategies that, in the experience of the participants, have worked well; 2) the challenges facing service provider organizations as they seek to serve immigrants within their constituencies, and the service gaps; 3) who should be engaged to help address the challenges.

3.1 Successful Strategies Enabling Effective Service to Immigrants

The participants cited numerous successes that their organizations are carrying out to support the settlement needs of immigrants and refugees, and the creative approaches they used to confront some of the challenges they face, such as challenges in reaching immigrant communities, or in offering language supports to enable service access, etc.

Numerous examples of successful activities were noted, which indicates that local organizations are committed to dealing with challenges to ensure effective services to immigrants. Below are some of the successful approaches that consultation participants tend to use:

- A. Using existing community profiles to understand community needs and plan for services; carrying out original participatory research in the community; and undertaking research and needs analysis about specific service target groups.
- B. Tapping into internal/external multilingual capabilities, such as having multi-lingual staff, using cultural interpretation services, and broadcasting service offerings in multiple languages.
- C. Building cultural competencies to serve immigrants more effectively, such as carrying out sensitization workshops for staff and creating opportunities for staff to talk about anti-racism and violence against women and how these oppressions influence service delivery.
- D. Building relationships with the community by cultivating and linking with leaders from immigrant communities; offering meeting places so as to facilitate development of relationships, and encouraging staff and volunteers to be creative in reaching out to immigrant communities. For example, some participants shared that they would go to women’s hair salons to do outreach.
- E. Tapping into the unique capacities of other organizations to enhance service to immigrants – for example staff secondment in settlement service organizations (a good example is Family Services Ottawa placing counsellors in Catholic Immigration Centre) – and generally fostering good cooperative relationships with other organizations; open, trust-based relationships will, with time, encourage greater creativity.
- F. Government leadership and policy is another enabler of success that many participants talked about. For example, the mandatory employment

equity committees set up by a past government remained after it was no longer mandatory and became a space for solution building within organizations. The City of Ottawa Task Force on Employment was another example of an enabler that was shared by the participants.

Some organizations provided specific examples of their work, including:

- › The City of Ottawa has developed an Equity and Diversity Lens and a Task Force on Employment and established an Immigration Portal to assist immigrants in locating information on services;
- › The Hire Immigrants Ottawa Program, hosted by the Internationally Trained Workers Partnership, which is working with local employers;
- › The Ottawa-Carleton Independent Living Centre works with schools and capitalizes on the relationships that schools have with individuals and their families in order to reach immigrant families;
- › Family Services Ottawa has created partnerships with different community services (e.g., Manwaashin Lodge, Crossroads, Ottawa Police Service) to bring together people who speak different languages, advertise programming in different communities, refer clients to appropriate settlement services, and second counsellors to different settlement agencies;
- › Multicultural Liaison Officers (MLOs) support immigrant families to integrate with the school system. It began with school boards in Ottawa and has now expanded across the country.

3.2 Capacity Challenges and Service Gaps

While the consultation participants acknowledged the many successes they have achieved, they also expressed frustration about the many barriers they face regularly in their efforts to provide services to immigrants. They identified three categories of general capacity challenges and specific service gaps that Ottawa needs to fill in order to meet the unique needs of immigrants and immigrant sub-groups.

3.2.1 Organizational-level Capacity Challenges

The participants agreed that the following capacity challenges impede effective services to immigrants:

A. Awareness / Mindset challenge:

A big issue shared by many participants is that there is an awareness / mindset challenge. Included in this broad theme are mindset challenges that see the needs of immigrants as too complicated and therefore not worthwhile to begin addressing within existing resources. Coupled with this, is a fear of reaching out and dealing with challenges.

An opposite but equally paralyzing view is that what is being done now is sufficient – this comes from superficial observations of amounts of investments and services, made by individuals that are often removed from the reality of under-service that is prevalent.

Another example is a tendency to undervalue people and communities – seeing immigrants and their communities as problems or needing to be brought up to ‘good standards’. Part of this is a focus on deficit

(e.g., a focus on lack of Canadian experience, rather than the invaluable asset that international experience can provide).

False and uninformed assumptions, such as the view that immigrants prefer to be served by minority staff, also pose a challenge. Because these views remain unchecked and untested, they keep reproducing realities where organizations will tend to hire outreach staff from immigrant communities, but will not address the need for changing organizational culture, providing board training, or undertaking service adaptation, etc.

B. Insularity:

This involves a tendency by organizations to work within the same circles; that is, they are removed from emerging realities and are more likely to reproduce stereotypes and under-serve immigrants. This tendency toward insularity can lead to undervaluing immigrants' capacity and excluding immigrant constituencies from organizational policy development and decision-making. It may also result in a lack of diversity among the staff of service provider organizations, diminishing the capacity of organizations to effectively serve diverse communities.

C. Insufficient connections with immigrant communities:

Many participants noted that organizations do not have sufficient connections with immigrants and immigrant communities. This was cited as a challenge in developing a real understanding of needs and appropriate approaches to informing immigrants of existing services.

D. Organizational culture:

Participants saw organizational culture as a significant obstacle to providing effective service to immigrants. Many noted that there is a tendency for organizations that have been resistant to institutional change to punish differences and, in doing so, to either maintain a lack of diversity among senior staff or to fail to capitalize on the benefits of existing diversity. There is also often a failure to provide boards of directors with the appropriate training and tools needed to enable them to foster change and diversity in the leadership of service organizations.

E. Frontline staff capacity:

Participants also discussed gaps in the capacity of frontline staff to serve immigrants. For example, they cited the need for increased staff training in areas such as case management, counselling, and cultural competence. They also discussed the need for improved organizational capacity in anti-racism and anti-oppression approaches.

3.2.2 Challenges Impeding Collaboration between Service Organizations

Participants see collaboration between service provider organizations and coordination of interventions as key to developing community solutions to overcome a number of the capacity challenges facing service providers. As mentioned above (see section 3.1), many of Ottawa's current successes in immigrant supports are achieved through creative partnerships. Examples among these are the Library-Settlement Partnership program, the Settlement-Education collaboration in establishing the Multicultural Liaison

Officers program, Family Services Ottawa's cooperation with Ottawa schools to reach immigrant families, and many others.

While participants recognized the importance of collaboration as a means of overcoming key barriers, they stressed the difficulties surrounding the establishment of successful partnerships. Summarized below are broad themes on the challenges impeding collaboration between service organizations:

A. Differing organizational structures:

It is often difficult to overcome differences between collaborating organizations as there may be significant variation in the pace of decision making, as well as formal and informal organizational cultures and philosophies. These differences often pose significant challenges and may lead potential partners to abandon their efforts to pursue potential solutions together.

B. Funding scarcity and an environment of competition:

Organizations experience differences in access to resources and in their relationships with funders, creating an environment of competition between organizations. The structure of funding opportunities, which often require one lead organization instead of joint leadership, may also create disincentives to collaboration.

C. Funding conditions:

Many participants noted funding conditions as a major obstacle, and particularly mentioned that funding conditions discourage service providers from serving clients with more complex needs. This is the result of the funders' requirement to track the number of clients served without mechanisms of reporting on the complexities

of some of the cases. The emphasis on quantity over quality in reporting tends to lead to the undesirable effect of excluding clients in greater need of support by service providers, who are under pressure to report high numbers of clients served.

D. Lack of funding for activities that foster collaboration:

Successful collaboration requires trust-building, relationship building, and time to explore together and to plan together. Currently, little or no resources are dedicated to such activities, leading to a disincentive to address the complexities of cooperation, such as clarifying different levels of contribution and accountability, addressing conflicts, and drawing lessons from partners' experiences.

3.2.3 Critical Gaps in Service and Service Access Supports

In addition to the categories of capacity challenges facing service provider organizations, the participants agreed that there are critical gaps in service and in service access supports (such as language interpretation). The following are the areas where participants agreed:

- A.** Services to support the settlement and integration of immigrant children and youth in neighbourhoods, in schools, and in accessing empowering recreation activities are needed. There is a need for Ottawa to develop a better understanding of the needs of immigrant children and youth and to plan for an effectively coordinated system of supports for immigrant children and youth.

- B. Services that appropriately support immigrants and refugees suffering from mental health challenges are needed. Currently there are little or no services that support the settlement and integration of refugees that do not come under the “Government Assisted Refugees (GAR)” program. There is a need for collaborative multi-sectoral strategies to help Ottawa deal with the needs of refugees.
- C. Interpretation services within service organizations are key to supporting access to services for immigrants that do not speak English or French. This gap affects immigrants’ access to many types of services, including health services, emergency services, or other critical services.
- D. Process and mechanisms to facilitate access to information, that go beyond flyers distributed in service networks, are needed. Access to information about services and knowledge about how our systems of health, education, settlement, and social services work are key to improving immigrants’ access to services.
- E. Need to enhance services in French to improve the success of Francophone immigrants’ and refugees’ settlement and integration process.

3.3 Who Should Be at the Planning Table to Address the Challenges?

It was fairly clear in all the small group discussions that planning for coordinated efforts to promote improved immigrant settlement and integration in Ottawa requires the participation of a broad range of stakeholders. This includes political and community

leaders, the media, service providers, and community members. Given the range of challenges, barriers and service gaps, as well as the proposed solutions, the participants identified a broad array of actors whom they felt should be involved in the planning process Ottawa is undertaking through OLIP, in order to address these matters. Specifically, consultation participants suggested the involvement of the following actors:

- > Elected officials at the federal, provincial and municipal levels;
- > Leaders in social and community action, including those who advocate for specific target groups, such as women and youth;
- > The media, including editors of major newspapers and television and radio producers;
- > Other Local Immigration Partnerships;
- > Research organizations;
- > Funders;
- > Regulatory bodies, professional associations, unions, and the Public Service Commission;
- > Private businesses, including small and medium enterprises;
- > Religious leaders;
- > Leadership from colleges and universities, representing faculty, staff and students;
- > Services providers in the areas of education, health, social services, housing, libraries, police, resource centres and victim services.



IV. Analysis and Recommendations

4.1 General Analysis on Emerging Themes

Overall, the consultation made it very clear that the participants have a significant amount of energy, enthusiasm and ideas to support efforts aimed at enabling immigrants and refugees to become full participants in the Ottawa community. This commitment has led to the development and implementation of many successful service models, policies and programs, implemented by a single organization or in collaboration with others.

Regrettably, there are a significant number of barriers to delivering comprehensive, holistic, timely and collaborative services to immigrants and refugees. The barriers appear in large part to be the result of factors that tend to be external to Ottawa's service agencies, within these agencies, and between these agencies. Like many other communities, the challenges of securing stable funding and provision of adequate funding by granting bodies is central to these challenges. At the same time, there are challenges related to how well Ottawa organizations reflect and understand the communities they are serving, the anti-racism/anti-oppression values of these organizations, the cultural competence of their staff and the degree to which these organizations have engaged in anti-racist organizational change processes. As well, these challenges are magnified in efforts to work collaboratively, especially in terms of the different paces of communication, outreach, and decision-making of large institutions and small community-based agencies. Also, it must be said that conspicuous by its absence was the leadership of Ottawa's service sector – with some exceptions, consultation participants were mainly middle managers and frontline staff.

The consultation offered a number of clear steps in tackling these challenges and moving the yardstick forward. Firstly, the participants emphasized the need for greater collaboration and connectedness in order to share information, grow professionally, and to support immigrants and refugees. Informed planning is needed to move toward successful collaboration between service providers in different sectors. On one level, there is a need for appropriate funding by external sources to support this, while on another level, there must be a commitment by larger Ottawa-based institutions to review and allocate appropriate resources to bring about needed results. Further, there is a need for organizations to pool resources to work together effectively.

Secondly, awareness must be built for the Ottawa community in general to internalize the reality that immigrant settlement and integration is not solely in the interest of immigrants and refugees but also benefits the community as a whole, promoting community well-being and economic and cultural development. These are important points to address at a public level through various mechanisms, including the media, public awareness campaigns, and providing opportunities for public involvement in the development and implementation of community wide collaborative models of service delivery.

Thirdly, promoting dialogue between community leaders and service organizations is essential to promoting understanding and to creating transparent decision-making processes. The engagement of immigrant community leaders in organizational processes and their participation in community planning for inclusive service design and delivery will have to be a key element of how Ottawa designs its new

strategy for improving the settlement and integration of immigrants.

Fourthly, leadership engagement will be a critical step towards the improvements that OLIP envisages. Very few heads of organizations joined in this important community discussion; and clearly, without the awareness and the commitment of the leaders of service organizations, progress cannot be attained. While OLIP does have a process in place to discuss its work with leaders in the Ottawa Community, it is important to bridge the gap between organizational leaders, the middle managers, and the frontline staff when devising solutions for improving community services to support immigrant integration. This is critical in developing dialogue within service organizations, between service organizations and, further, between these organizations and leaders within immigrant and refugee communities. In support of this point, anti-racism and cultural competency principles are important for understanding the nuances of immigrant settlement and integration, for promoting progressive organizational change, and for providing effective services to diverse communities. Frameworks are needed to promote the inclusion of these principles in planning and collaboration for improved immigrant settlement and integration.

Fifthly, an important area of concern was related to Francophone services and the need to address these both separately and in relationship with other local agencies. The bilingual nature of the Ottawa Community and the large number of Francophone immigrants makes it imperative for Ottawa to create a common understanding regarding the settlement and integration path of Francophone immigrants and to integrate in OLIP's planning processes explicit attention to the needs of Francophone immigrants.

Finally, the vision, principles, and processes established by OLIP are hugely important and are widely supported by Ottawa's social services institutions and organizations. As the Ottawa community moves forward, it will be important to clearly identify benchmarks for community success. This will help stakeholders maintain their current enthusiasm and commitment.

Based on participants' input, suggestions for solutions were made in the areas of: 1) collaboration and coordination; 2) policy; 3) services and organizations; and 4) economic integration.

4.2 Recommendations on Specific Themes

4.2.1 Collaboration and Coordination

- › Developing common policies and procedures, to guide work within agencies and collaborations between agencies, for serving immigrants and refugees;
- › Promoting ongoing and effective communications between agencies to enhance common approaches to policy development and service delivery;
- › Conducting ongoing and collaborative outreach to immigrant and refugee communities and engaging community leaders in decision-making and service delivery;
- › Establishing specific approaches and collaborative networks amongst Francophone service

agencies and immigrants/refugees who require services in French;

- › Developing social networking approaches, including using the internet, to support connections between service agencies and between such agencies and immigrants/refugees.

4.2.2 Policy

- › Building awareness locally, provincially and nationally on the importance of immigrant settlement and its social, economic, political and cultural benefits;
- › Addressing time limits and eligibility for services, as service needs often extend well beyond the cut-off point for service eligibility. Considerations must be made for multiple options, ranging from funder collaborations to building niches for social investment opportunities and private philanthropy for under-funded areas – such as service for non GAR refugees.
- › Ensuring funding strategies are based on Ottawa needs and not on other regions, as each region has its specific needs, resources and capacities;
- › Establishing, among funders, consistent, adequate and sustainable funding to support policy development, education and training for frontline staff in service organizations, including settlement workers, municipal service providers, and other key service agencies.

4.2.3 Services and Organizations

- › Educating and training immigrants to navigate services so they are able to act on their own and with the support of services;
- › Providing mandatory anti-racism and cultural competency training for all professionals involved in providing services to immigrants and refugees, including decision-makers, and engaging these staff and decision-makers in efforts that build a common understanding of anti-racism and cultural competencies;
- › Guiding organizational change and community development work through dedicated research and knowledge mobilization and management;
- › Supporting service agencies to provide space for immigrants to hold meetings, set agendas, engage in community development, and connect with resources and services;
- › Work with local service providing agencies to engage Ottawa's highly-skilled immigrants in all aspects of service delivery organizations, including through employment and participation in decision-making.
- › Providing specific approaches to services for children and youth, seniors, and women.

4.2.4 Economic Integration

- › Breaking down employment barriers and hiring immigrants and refugees, particularly in agencies providing services to them so that they reflect the communities they serve;

- › Developing employment programs that engage government, funders, unions, community agencies, and regulatory bodies, along with immigrants and refugees; and
- › Addressing barriers to trades and professions by working directly with regulatory bodies to enhance and speed up access.

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Appendix A: Consultation Agenda

-  **8:00** Arrival and Registration
-  **8:30** Welcoming Remarks and Orientation
Dick Stewart, Chair of the OLIP Council and Caroline Andrew, Chair of OLIP Steering Committee
-  **10:30** Overview of OLIP
Hindia Mohamoud, OLIP Project Director
- Keynote Presentation:
Sherri Torjman, Vice-President, Caledon Institute of Social Policy
- Current Experience:
How does your organization seek to serve immigrants?
- Where have you been able to achieve these goals?
- What has made this success possible?
- Break
- Current Challenges:
What are your major challenges in serving immigrants?
What gaps in service to immigrants are you aware of?
How might these challenges and gaps be addressed?
- Opportunities for Inter-sectoral Collaboration
Where do you see opportunities for collaboration across sectors to better serve immigrants?
-  **11:45** Lunch
- Moving Forward:
- Next steps and closing remarks by Hindia Mohamoud
-  **13:00** Adjournment

Appendix B: Consultation Participants

List of Participants

Speakers :

- > **Dick Stewart**
OLIP Council Chair
- > **Caroline Andrew**
OLIP Steering Committee Chair
- > **Sherri Torjman**
Keynote Speaker
Vice President of Caledon Institute
- > **Hindia Mohamoud**
OLIP Project Director

Facilitators:

- > Bill Shields
- > Rosanne Emard
- > Charles Smith

Participants:

- > **Nimo Abubakar**
Senior's Case Manager/Health Consultant
Somali Centre for Family Services
- > **Caroline Andrew**
Chair, Steering Committee
Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership

- > **Marcia Aronson**
Manager
Ottawa Public Library
- > **Norah Barongo**
Inventory Coordinator
Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership
- > **Mary Barr**
Director of Settlement and Intergovernmental
Affairs for the Ontario Region
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- > **Syeda Bhatti**
Volunteer
Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership
- > **Emily Boehm**
Volunteer
Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership
- > **Candice Botha**
Individual Empowerment and Skills
Development Facilitator
Ottawa Carleton Independent Living Centre
- > **Karen Anne Blakely**
Director of Seniors Services
Jewish Family Services
- > **George Brown**
President
Ottawa Community Loan Fund

- › **Aaron Burry**
Acting General Manager
City of Ottawa, Community and Social Services
Department
- › **Bernadette Bonk**
Program Manager, Employment
City of Ottawa, Community and Social Services
Department
- › **Kathleen Cameron**
Program Manager
Parent Resource Centre
- › **April Carrière**
Research Committee
Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership
- › **Marie-Andrée Carrière,**
Executive Director
Community Information Centre of Ottawa
- › **Abai Coker**
Administrator Adult ESL programs
Ottawa Catholic School Board
- › **Zoi Coucopoulos**
Manager of Administration
Family Services Ottawa
- › **Yolande Cremer**
Program Manager, Customer Relations and
Development
City of Ottawa, Parks, Recreation and Cultural
Service Department
- › **Pauline Daling**
Strategic Initiatives and Business Planning
City of Ottawa, Community and Protective
Services
- › **Franca DiDiomete**
Executive Director
Catholic Family Service of Ottawa
- › **Abebe Engdasaw**
Equal Access and Diversity Specialist
Ottawa Public Health
- › **Clara Freire**
Manager, Client Service Strategies
City of Ottawa, Organizational Development and
Performance Department
- › **Elizabeth Farrell**
Program Manager, Employment Services
City of Ottawa, Community and Social Services
Department
- › **Sharon Fernandez**
Independent Consultant, Employment,
Immigration, Equity and Diversity
- › **Suzanne Gagnon**
Regional Director
Ontario Ministry of Community and Social
Services
- › **Aline Gahimbare**
Agente de projet région Est de l'Ontario
Campagne Voisin-es, ami-es et familles (VAF)
- › **Michel Gervais**
Executive Director
Vanier Community Service Centre
- › **David Gibson**
Executive Director
Sandy Hill Community Health Centre

- › **Colin Gillespie**
Volunteer
Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership
- › **Rick Goodwin**
Executive Director
The Men's Project
- › **Mohamoud Hagi-Aden**
Coordinator, Community Connections Program
South-East Ottawa Community Centre
- › **Mohamud Hassan**
Coordinator, Funding and Employment
Development
City of Ottawa, Community and Social Services
Department
- › **Mohamed A. Islam**
Youth Worker
Somali Centre for Family Services
- › **Adriana Jary**
Manager, Settlement Services
Jewish Family Services
- › **Jolanta Kania**
Administrator, International Languages
Programs
Ottawa Catholic School Board
- › **Abid Khawaja**
Settlement Officer, Ontario Region
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- › **Susan Kuruvilla**
Community Health Worker
South Nepean Community Health Centre
- › **Benoit Laberge**
Coordonnateur, Service de développement com-
munautaire
Conseil des écoles publiques de l'est de
l'Ontario
- › **Line LeBel-Lylyk**
Coordonnatrice
Comité Réseau d'Ottawa
- › **Sylvie Leclerc**
Agente de développement communautaire
Conseil des écoles publiques de l'est de
l'Ontario
- › **Wanda MacDonald**
Executive Director
Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
- › **Zoë Mallett**
Administrative Assistant
Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership
- › **Christina Marchant**
Director, Health Promotion
Centretown Community Health Centre
- › **Liam Martin**
Volunteer
Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership
- › **Jack McCarthy**
Executive Director
Somerset West Community Health Centre
- › **Elaine Medline**
Special Projects and Communications
Coordinator
Champlain Local Health Integration Network

- › **Tanya Mendes-Gagnon**
Senior Manager, Newcomer Information Centre
National Capital Region YMCA-YWCA
- › **Irene Mlambo**
HIV/AIDS Prevention Coordinator
Somerset West Community Health Centre
- › **Hamdi Mohamed**
Executive Director
Ottawa Community Immigrant Services
Organization
- › **Hindia Mohamoud**
Project Director
Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership
- › **Alex Munter**
Executive Director
Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa
- › **Jill Murphy**
Outreach and Research Coordinator
Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership
- › **Kimberley Murray**
Policy and Planning Specialist, Client Service
Strategies Branch
City of Ottawa, Organizational Development &
Performance Department
- › **Sahar Noja**
Outreach Settlement Counsellor
Jewish Family Services
- › **Carl Nicholson**
Executive Director
Catholic Immigration Centre
- › **Nicole Olivier**
Program Coordinator
La Cité Collégiale
- › **Dominique Paris-MacKay**
Anti-Poverty Community Coordinator
Overbrook-Forbes Community Resource Centre
- › **David Pepper**
Director of Community Development
Ottawa Police Service
- › **Shahnaz Perveen**
Housing and Transitional Support Worker
Immigration Women Services Ottawa
- › **Richard Plummer**
Director, Inclusion
United Way/Centraide Ottawa
- › **Nicole Rhéaume**
Community Development Manager
Ottawa Community Housing
- › **Dunia Sakr**
Volunteer Co-ordinator for Arabic Seniors
Hunt Club Riverside Community Service Centre
- › **Janice Sargent**
Director, Settlement to Employment Program
(STEP)
Algonquin College
- › **Larissa Silver**
Director of Programs and Services
Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre
- › **Valerie Smith**
Youth Coordinator

Ottawa Community Immigrant Services
Organization

- > **Brad Spooner**
Program Manager
Nepean, Rideau and Osgoode Community Health
Centre
- > **Simone Thibault**
Executive Director
Centretown Community Health Centre
- > **Shailja Verma**
Manager, Continuing and Community Education
Ottawa Catholic School Board
- > **Geordie Walker**
System Principal
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- > **Paul Weber**
Senior Policy Advisor
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- > **Chris White**
Event Manager
Community Cup 2010
- > **Rula Worall**
Supervisor, Settlement Unit
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- > **Ying Xie**
Program Manager, Employment Support
Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre
- > **Ella Zabarsky**
Outreach Settlement Counselor
Jewish Family Services



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